WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method for distributing computer software from a first computer

2   system, comprising:

3   receiving a request for software from a second computer system;

4   generating a message;

5   encrypting the generated message;

6   transmitting the encrypted message to the second computer system;

7   receiving an encrypted response from the second computer system;

8   processing the encrypted response to determine whether the second computer

9   system is authorized to access the software; and

10   permitting the second computer system access to the software after

11   determining that the second computer system is authorized to access the software.

1   2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the software comprises software that

2   is a member of a set of software types comprising computer programs, data, text,

3   images, sound, and video.

1   3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising transmitting the software to

2   the second computer system after permitting access.

1   4.   The method of claim 1, wherein generating the message further

2   comprises generating a random component to include within the message.

1   5.   The method of claim 1 wherein the random component is comprised of

2   a time stamp.

1   6.   The method of claim 4, wherein the time stamp is inserted at an offset

2   into the message.

1   7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the software comprises a computer
2   program, further comprising automatically causing the installation of the computer
3   software on the second computer system when the computer software is transmitted to
4   the second computer system.

1   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein processing the encrypted response
2   further comprises determining whether a message included in the encrypted response
3   matches the generated message, wherein the second computer is authorized to access
4   the software if the message included in the encrypted response matches the generated
5   message.

1   9.   The method of claim 8, wherein encrypting the message comprises
2   encrypting the message with a private key of the first computer system that is the only
3   key capable of being decrypted by a public key associated with the first computer
4   system, wherein the second computer system maintains the public key that is capable
5   of decrypting messages encrypted with the first computer system's private key,
6   wherein the encrypted response received from the second computer system is
7   encrypted with the second computer system's private key, wherein processing the
8   encrypted response further comprises decrypting the encrypted response with the
9   public key of the second computer system.

1   10.   The method of claim 1, wherein the generated message includes a
2   random component and a request for configuration data from the second computer
3   system, wherein processing the encrypted response comprises determining whether
4   the response includes configuration data for a system that is authorized to access the
5   computer software.

1   11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the generated message is encrypted

2 with a private key of the first computer system, wherein the first computer system

3 maintains a private key that is the only key capable of being decrypted by a public key

4 associated with the first computer system, and wherein the encrypted response is

5 encrypted with a private key of the second computer system, wherein the first

6 computer system maintains a public key associated with the second computer system

7 that is the only key capable of decrypting the encrypted message.

1   12.   A method for accessing computer software from a first computer

2 system with a second computer system, comprising:

3   transmitting a request for the software to the first computer system;

4   receiving an encrypted message from the first computer system;

5   processing the encrypted message to generate a response message;

6   transmitting the response message to the first computer system; and

7   receiving access to the requested software in response to the response

8 message.

1   13.   The method of claim 12, wherein the software comprises software that

2 is a member of a set of software types comprising computer programs, data, text,

3 images, sound, and video.

1   14.   The method of claim 12, wherein the received encrypted message is

2 encrypted with a private key of the first computer system that is the only key capable

3 of being decrypted by a public key associated with the first computer system, further

4 comprising;

5   decrypting the received encrypted message with the public key associated with

6 the first computer system that is the only key capable of decrypting messages

7 encrypted with the first computer system's private key;

8 encrypting the decrypted message with the second computer system's private

9 key; and

10 transmitting the message encrypted with the second computer system's private

11 key to the first computer system.

1 15. The method of claim 12, wherein the received encrypted message

2 includes a random component and a request for configuration data from the second

3 computer system, further comprising adding configuration data for the second

4 computer system to the decrypted message before encrypting the message with the

5 second computer system's private key

1 16. A system for distributing computer software from a first computer

2 system, comprising:

3 means for receiving a request for software from a second computer system;

4 means for generating a message;

5 means for encrypting the generated message;

6 means for transmitting the encrypted message to the second computer system;

7 means for receiving an encrypted response from the second computer system;

8 means for processing the encrypted response to determine whether the second

9 computer system is authorized to access the software; and

10 means for permitting the second computer system access to the software after

11 determining that the second computer system is authorized to access the software.

1 17. The system of claim 16, wherein the software comprises software that

2 is a member of a set of software types comprising computer programs, data, text,

3 images, sound, and video.

1   18.   The system of claim 16, further comprising means for transmitting the

2   software to the second computer system after permitting access.

1   19.   The system of claim 16, wherein the means for generating the message

2   further comprises generating a random component to include within the message.

1   20.   The system of claim 16, wherein the software comprises a computer

2   program, further comprising means for automatically causing the installation of the

3   computer software on the second computer system when the computer software is

4   transmitted to the second computer system.

1   21.   The system of claim 16, wherein the means for processing the

2   encrypted response further comprises determining whether a message included in the

3   encrypted response matches the generated message, wherein the second computer is

4   authorized to access the software if the message included in the encrypted response

5   matches the generated message.

1   22.   The system of claim 21, wherein the means for encrypting the message

2   comprises encrypting the message with a private key of the first computer system that

3   is the only key capable of being decrypted by a public key associated with the first

4   computer system, wherein the second computer system maintains the public key that

5   is capable of decrypting messages encrypted with the first computer system's private

6   key, wherein the encrypted response received from the second computer system is

7   encrypted with the second computer system's private key, wherein the means for

8   processing the encrypted response further comprises decrypting the encrypted

9   response with the public key of the second computer system.

1   23.   The system of claim 16, wherein the generated message includes a

2   random component and a request for configuration data from the second computer

3   system, wherein processing the encrypted response comprises determining whether

4   the response includes configuration data for a system that is authorized to access the

5   computer software.

1   24.   The system of claim 23, wherein the generated message is encrypted

2   with a private key of the first computer system, wherein the first computer system

3   maintains a private key that is the only key capable of being decrypted by a public key

4   associated with the first computer system, and wherein the encrypted response is

5   encrypted with a private key of the second computer system, wherein the first

6   computer system maintains a public key associated with the second computer system

7   that is the only key capable of decrypting the encrypted message.

1   25.   A system for accessing computer software from a first computer

2   system with a second computer system, comprising:

3   means for transmitting a request for the software to the first computer system;

4   means for receiving an encrypted message from the first computer system;

5   means for processing the encrypted message to generate a response message;

6   means for transmitting the response message to the first computer system; and

7   means for receiving access to the requested software in response to the

8   response message.

1   26.   The system of claim 25, wherein the received encrypted message is

2   encrypted with a private key of the first computer system that is the only key capable

3   of being decrypted by a public key associated with the first computer system, further

4   comprising;

5 means for decrypting the received encrypted message with the public key

6 associated with the first computer system that is the only key capable of decrypting

7 messages encrypted with the first computer system's private key;

8 means for encrypting the decrypted message with the second computer

9 system's private key; and

10 means for transmitting the message encrypted with the second computer

11 system's private key to the first computer system.

1   27.   An article of manufacture for use in distributing computer software

2 from a first computer system the article of manufacture comprising computer usable

3 media including at least one computer program embedded therein that causes the first

4 computer system to perform:

5 receiving a request for software from a second computer system;

6 generating a message;

7 encrypting the generated message;

8 transmitting the encrypted message to the second computer system;

9 receiving an encrypted response from the second computer system;

10 processing the encrypted response to determine whether the second computer

11 system is authorized to access the software; and

12 permitting the second computer system access to the software after

13 determining that the second computer system is authorized to access the software.

1   28.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the software

2 comprises software that is a member of a set of software types comprising computer

3 programs, data, text, images, sound, and video.

1   29.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, further comprising transmitting

2 the software to the second computer system after permitting access.

1   30.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein generating the

2   message further comprises generating a random component to include within the

3   message.

1   31.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the random

2   component is comprised of a time stamp.

1   32.   The article of manufacture of claim 30, wherein the time stamp is

2   inserted at an offset into the message.

1   33.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the software

2   comprises a computer program, further comprising automatically causing the

3   installation of the computer software on the second computer system when the

4   computer software is transmitted to the second computer system.

1   34.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein processing the

2   encrypted response further comprises determining whether a message included in the

3   encrypted response matches the generated message, wherein the second computer is

4   authorized to access the software if the message included in the encrypted response

5   matches the generated message.

1   35.   The article of manufacture of claim 34, wherein encrypting the

2   message comprises encrypting the message with a private key of the first computer

3   system that is the only key capable of being decrypted by a public key associated with

4   the first computer system, wherein the second computer system maintains the public

5   key that is capable of decrypting messages encrypted with the first computer system's

6   private key, wherein the encrypted response received from the second computer

7   system is encrypted with the second computer system's private key, wherein

8 processing the encrypted response further comprises decrypting the encrypted

9 response with the public key of the second computer system.

1   36.   The article of manufacture of claim 37, wherein the generated message

2 includes a random component and a request for configuration data from the second

3 computer system, wherein processing the encrypted response comprises determining

4 whether the response includes configuration data for a system that is authorized to

5 access the computer software.

1   37.   The article of manufacture of claim 36, wherein the generated message

2 is encrypted with a private key of the first computer system, wherein the first

3 computer system maintains a private key that is the only key capable of being

4 decrypted by a public key associated with the first computer system, and wherein the

5 encrypted response is encrypted with a private key of the second computer system,

6 wherein the first computer system maintains a public key associated with the second

7 computer system that is the only key capable of decrypting the encrypted message.

1   38.   The article of manufacture of claim 27, the article of manufacture

2 comprising at least one additional software program to cause the second computer

3 system to perform:

4   transmitting a request for the software to the first computer system;

5   receiving an encrypted message from the first computer system;

6   processing the encrypted message to generate a response message;

7   transmitting the response message to the first computer system; and

8   receiving access to the requested software in response to the response

9 message.

1   39.   The article of manufacture of claim 38, wherein the received encrypted

2   message is encrypted with a private key of the first computer system that is the only

3   key capable of being decrypted by a public key associated with the first computer

4   system, further comprising;

5   decrypting the received encrypted message with the public key associated with

6   the first computer system that is the only key capable of decrypting messages

7   encrypted with the first computer system's private key;

8   encrypting the decrypted message with the second computer system's private

9   key; and

10   transmitting the message encrypted with the second computer system's private

11   key to the first computer system.

1   40.   The article of manufacture of claim 38, wherein the received encrypted

2   message includes a random component and a request for configuration data from the

3   second computer system, further comprising adding configuration data for the second

4   computer system to the decrypted message before encrypting the message with the

5   second computer system's private key